

To: **Planning Commission**
From: **Melissa Sonnek, City Planner**
Date: **August 18, 2020**

Conditional Use Permit, Site Plan, Rezoning, and Plat for 1571 Robert St.

REQUEST:

On behalf of Roers Companies, ESG Architects is requesting the review of multiple applications for the redevelopment of the northwest corner of Robert Street and Wentworth Avenue. The proposed redevelopment consists of a five story building containing 187 unit apartments with 5,000 square feet of retail/commercial on the first floor.

Applications for Review:

- Conditional Use Permit – Mix of commercial/residential uses & Structure with 16+ dwelling units,
- Site Plan – Construction of five story mixed-use building (187 apartments & 5,000 sq ft of retail),
- Rezoning from B6 – Town Center Mixed Use to PMD – Planned Mixed-Use Development, with B6 – Town Center Mixed Use underlying zoning,
- Preliminary and Final Plat – Consolidation of existing lots to create one lot, dedicate right of way and easements.

Attachments:

Applications/notice

Memos from Environmental Comm., WSB Engineering, Dakota Co, Plat Commission, and MnDot

Submitted plans



CURRENT USES AND ZONING:

	Use	Zoning
Subject Property	Commercial – Aamco, Batteries Plus	B6 - Town Center
Properties to North	Commercial – Nappa Auto	B6 - Town Center
Properties to East	Commercial – Noodles and Co, Pollo Campero, KFC	B6 - Town Center
Properties to South	Commercial – LA Fitness	B6 - Town Center
Properties to West	Commercial – Carbone's, Laundromat, Multi-tenant office building	B6 - Town Center

Proposal

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing Aamco, Maaco, and Batteries Plus buildings, Granny Donuts will remain unaltered, to make room for a 5 story 187-unit apartment building with 5,000 square feet of retail/commercial. This is the last remaining corner that has been primed for redevelopment, for the area designated as Town Center One.

The first floor of the building will contain a few walk-up apartment units, 5,000 square feet of retail, 7,000 square feet of lobby/amenity area for both the residents and the shoppers, interior bike storage, as well as interior trash storage on either end of the building. Below the building (underground) will be 164 underground parking stalls, some of which will offer room for both bicycle and automobile parking. The remaining floors will offer a combination of studio, one, one + den, and two bedroom apartments as well as a small storage area.



1) CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT ANALYSIS:

Within the B6 – Town Center Mixed Use district, structures containing a mix of commercial and residential uses and structures containing more than 16 units are both conditional uses.

Long Term Planning Document Review

The 2040 Comprehensive plan designated the northwest corner of Robert St. and Wentworth Ave. as an area to likely redevelop by 2030 as mixed use with 20-40 units per acre (see image below – Pg. 13 of 2040 Comp Plan).



The proposed plans call for 58.9 units per acre, which is the most dense redevelopment application in recent years. Recent comparable projects are 1631 Marthaler and 895 Robert (see table below). The Comp Plan and the Renaissance plan both call for increased density along Robert Street, specifically, to help revitalize the existing commercial spaces.

Adding density is more than just housing more people, it is important to ensure that the existing infrastructure can absorb the additional activity. According to the Travel Demand Management Project study completed, the existing roads and other infrastructure can support this level of increase. Additional detail provided later in this document.

Recent Multi-Family Redevelopment in West St. Paul

Address	Project	Units per Acre
252 Marie Ave E	252 Rooftop – Market Rate	27.7
1631 Marthaler Ln	Darts – Senior Apt	58.7
240 Thompson Ave E	Oppidan/Golf Course – Market Rate	28.1
895 Robert St	CDA North Gateway - Affordable	57.2
1201 Signal Hills	Dominium – Affordable/Senior	35.0
1571 Robert St	Town Center One – Market Rate	58.9

Multi-Family/Housing Demand

Recent market trends have made finding any sort of housing (affordable, market rate, and owner occupied) difficult to acquire. The recent influx in multifamily housing will create a better variety of options for current and future residents. As more multifamily options become available, the “filtering” process can begin, allowing individuals to transition between housing types and level of affordability. As newer housing options come in residents are able to upgrade, or “filter up”, leaving older (often more affordable) housing options more available for residents in lower income levels also filter through the housing cycle.

Proximity to Amenities

As you might guess by the name, Town Center One, this site offers close proximity to several retail, restaurant, and employment options within walking distance, as well as multiple bus routes, one actually being located directly on site.

Sites within ¼ mile

- Anchor Bank,
- Carbone's Pizza,
- Fed Ex,
- Sports Clips
- Midas,
- Telecris Plasma,
- Taco Bell,
- UPS Store,
- T-Mobile,
- Aloha Nails,
- Pawn America,
- Pho Saigon,
- Great Health and Nutrition,
- Wentworth Library,
- Dunham's Bar,
- Rex Music,
- Starbucks,
- Napa Auto,
- Arby's,
- Discount Tire,
- Wells Fargo,
- Wooden Tub Laundromat,
- US Bank,
- El Taquito,
- Pollo Campero,
- Sola Salon,
- Planet Fitness,
- Menards,
- CVS Pharmacy,
- MGM Liquor,
- Mister Car Wash,
- Hobby Lobby,
- Jimmy Johns,
- Verizon,
- KFC,
- Q'Doba,
- Jersey Mikes,
- Raising Cane's Chicken,
- Tapemark,
- Kinder Care Day Care,
- Walmart,
- Batteries Plus,
- Target,
- Granny's Donuts,
- LA Fitness,
- Subway,
- Panda Express,
- Panera Bread,
- Noodles and Co,
- Applebee's,
- 5-8 Grill,
- West St. Paul Dome,
- Marthaler Park,
- Harrison Dental,
- Thomas Allen Inc.,
- DaVita Dialysis,
- HyVee

2) SITE PLAN ANALYSIS:

A part of the site plan includes the Planned Mixed-Use Development tag, PMD. This offers the site deviation from the code to create a higher quality environment. Similarly, code language from the PRD (Planned Residential Development) reads, *"to allow greater variety in the types of residential environment available, to respond to recent changes in housing demands and in new housing concepts, to encourage the provision of private common open space ancillary to new housing developments, and to allow a more efficient allocation and maintenance of public facilities"*

The proposed site plan complies with requirements as detailed by the code, unless noted by the *.

Setbacks

Building

	Code Setbacks	Proposed Setbacks
Front (Wentworth Ave)	10 – 40ft	12ft
Rear	20ft Min.	9.4ft*
Side (East) Adj to Street	10 – 30 ft	5ft*
Side (West)	0 ft	39ft

**Intent of the eastern side yard setback of 10-30ft. is intended to bring the building closer up to the street. Staff believes the proposal complies with this.*

Parking

	Code Setbacks	Proposed Setbacks
Front <i>(Wentworth Ave)</i>	Not Permitted	N/A
Rear	10ft Min.	22ft
Side <i>(East) Adj to Street</i>	10ft Min	18.5ft
Side <i>(West)</i>	0ft	0ft

Parking Counts

The submitted plans include 101 surface parking stalls and 164 underground stalls totaling to 265 parking stalls. Additionally many of the underground stalls will offer both automobile and bicycle parking. This equates out to 1.42 parking stalls per unit, while this is lower than the recent accepted parking ratio of 1.5, the applicant is comfortable with the proposed ratio based on similar projects in their existing portfolio.

City Staff is comfortable with this parking ratio since only 17.6% (33 units) of the total number of units are two bedrooms, this means that the remaining 82% are either studio, one bedroom, or one bedroom plus den units. Also, if in the future additional parking is needed, approximately 22 additional stalls can be created if the dog park is removed. These additional stalls would bring the site up to the 1.5 stalls per unit ratio.

As mentioned previously in this report, there are also options for public transit on and nearby the site. This is an important feature, as the site will also offer 5,000 square feet for retail use. It is fairly common for the peak business hours for retail uses to be off-set from when the majority of the residents living in the units are at work or off site.

Drive Aisle and Parking Stall Dimensions

The majority of parking stall depths measure 18ft rather than the 20ft as required by code. This is not an uncommon deviation from the code, as vehicles today are smaller and shorter than they were when the parking dimensions were originally adopted. Parking stall widths measure 9ft, and are consistent with code requirements throughout the site. The proposed drive-aisles exceed the minimum of 22ft, and measure 24ft in most locations, with the exception of a few areas for fire access and maneuverability offering 26ft wide drive aisles.

Curbing

The existing parking lot includes B612 curbing as required by code.

Travel Demand Management Study

Due to the change in use and to ensure the success of the project, the applicant had a third party conduct a travel Demand Management study. This study reviewed both parking needs as well as existing and future traffic trends as a result of the proposed project.

According to the study, the combination of 187 apartments and 5,000 square feet of retail would require 217 parking spaces during peak parking times, 164 stalls for the apartments and 53 stalls for the retail use (used primarily in the PM hours). The submitted site plan includes 265 parking stalls, which exceeds what the study outlines for a minimum requirement.

Trip Generation Data

	AM Trips	PM Trips	Total Trips
Residential Use	67	82	149
Retail Use	N/A	57	57
Total Trips	+67	+139	+206

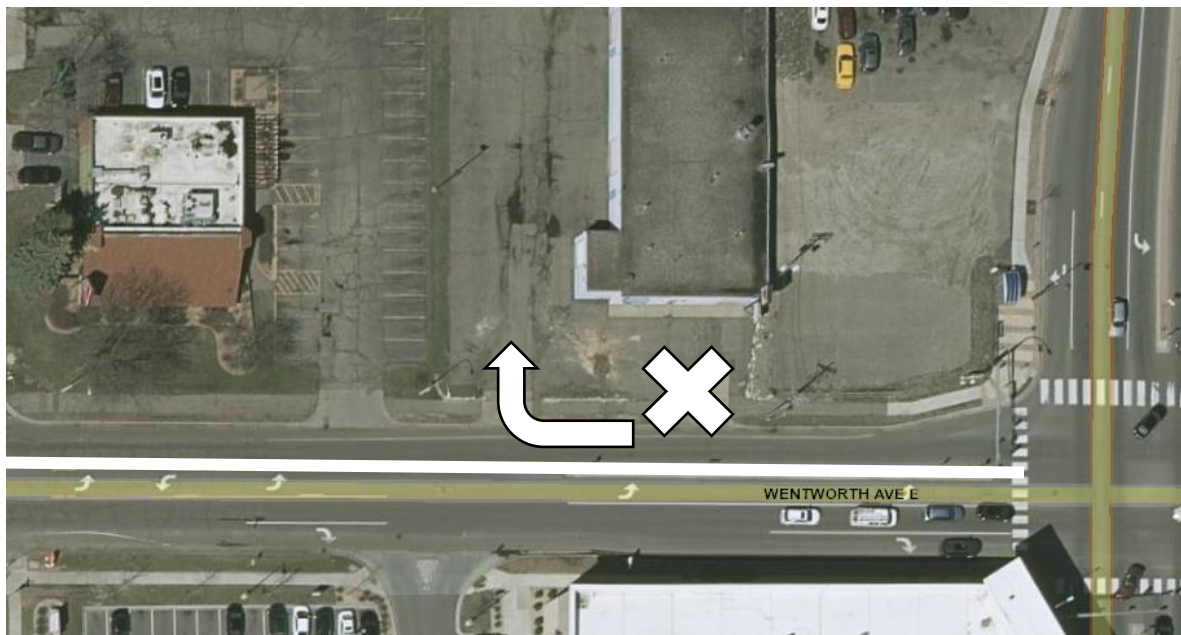
Parking aside, even with the expected additional trips being generated as a part of the proposed development, the majority of surrounding traffic options will continue to function at their existing “level of service”. Level of service refers to the operating conditions of transportation facilities, such as traffic signals and stop-controlled intersections, travel speeds, road width, number of lanes, etc. All of these factors are taken into consideration and assigned a letter grade (A – F) to quantify how a road is operating in comparison to the predetermined maximum capacity.

Level of Service by Intersection (Year 2022)

	Level of Service (No Build Scenario)	Level of Service (Project Build Scenario)
Robert/Thompson	B	B
Thompson/Livingston	A	A
Wentworth/Livingston	A	A

Site Access – Wentworth Avenue

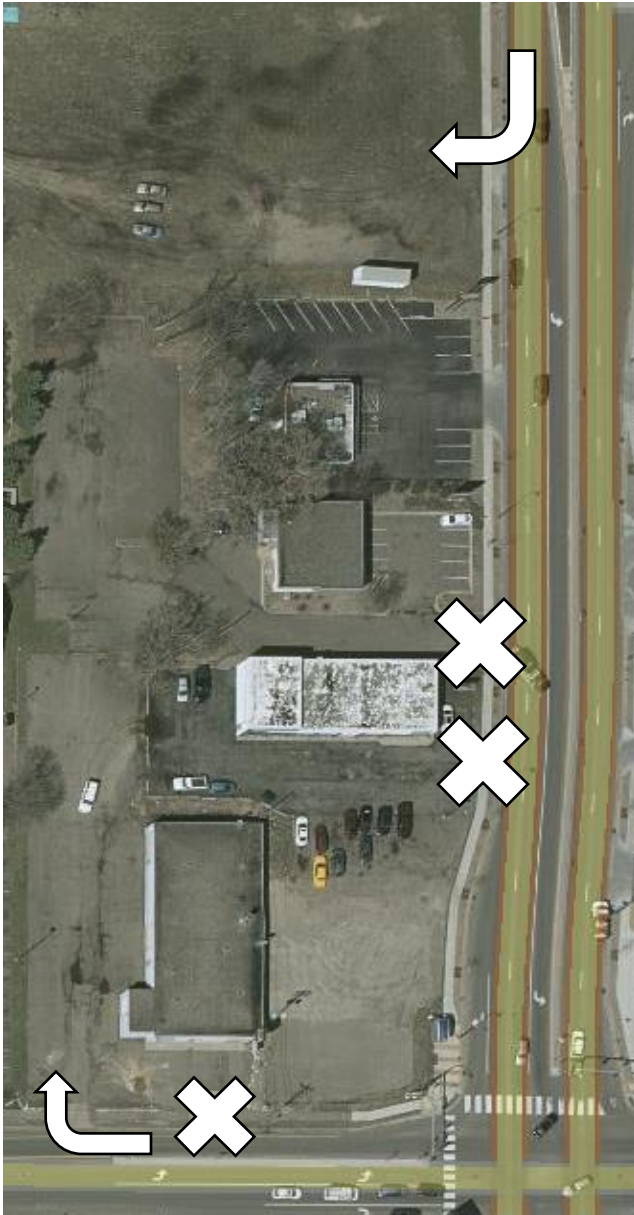
The Wentworth Avenue access to the site was reviewed by Dakota County during their County Plat Commission meeting on August 5th. Due to the conflicts currently happening at the site, Dakota County is requiring that, in order to maintain the western Wentworth access to the site, the center median would have to be extended west to Livingston Avenue.



The applicant will be work with City Staff and Dakota County to add the median extension to the 2021 Wentworth Avenue road overlay project. Staff is recommending as a condition of approval, that the applicant adhere to the items listed in the Dakota County Plat Commission Memo dated August 7, 2020.

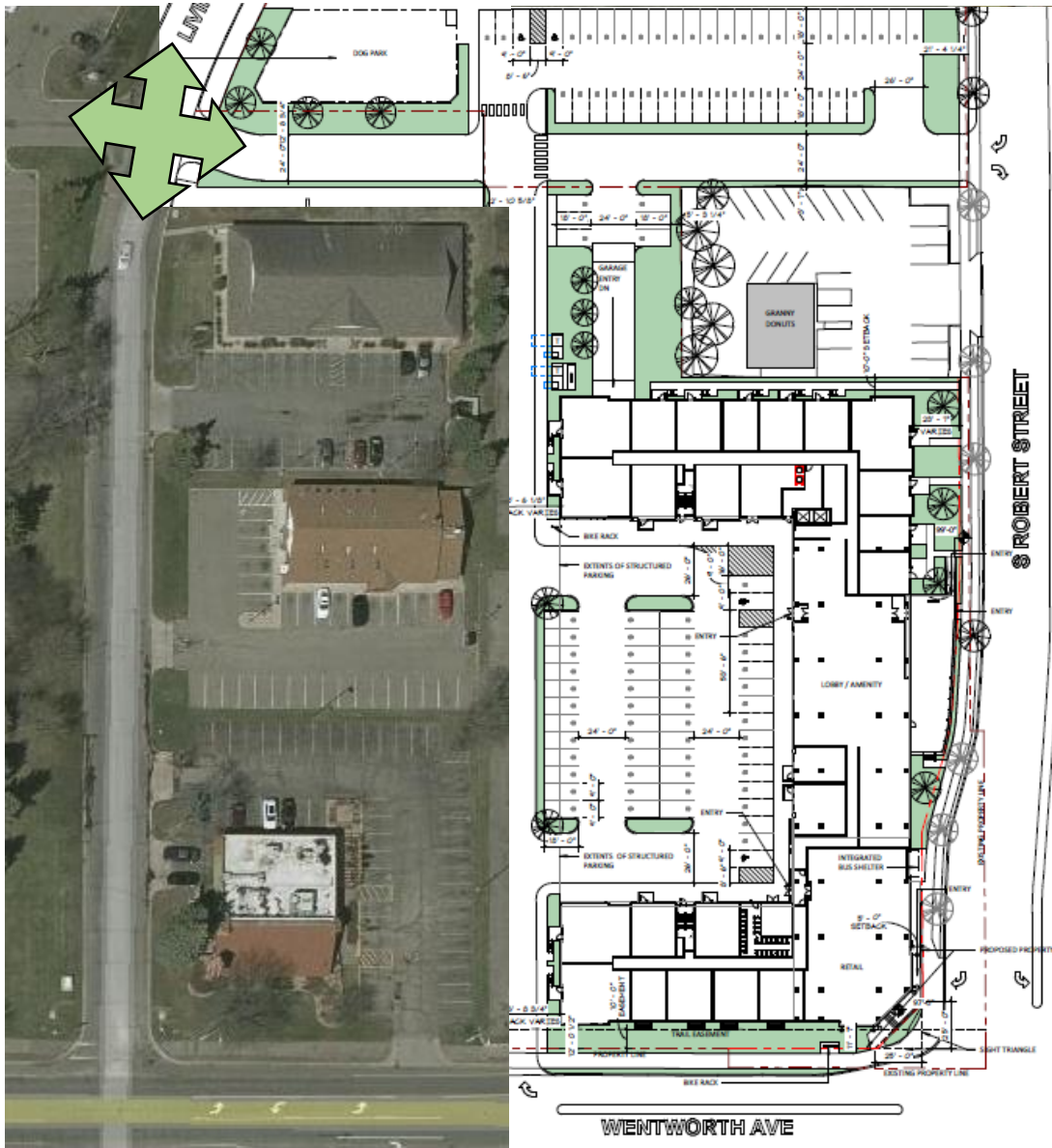
Site Access – Robert Street

The site as it exists today, has several right in and right out curb cuts onto Robert Street. As with many state and county roads, when a site redevelops, multiple accesses are eliminated and one access point is allowed to remain. Since Granny Donuts is not included in the redevelopment proposal, their existing access will remain unchanged. However, the two curb cuts on the southern leg, will be removed and the northern most access (Blockbuster entrance) will remain.



Site Access – Livingston Avenue

The site will have a full access (all turning movements) on and off of Livingston Avenue on the northwestern corner of the site. This access will line up nicely with the access to the multi-tenant office building to the west as shown in the image below.



Pedestrian/Sidewalk Connectivity

There are existing sidewalk connections on both Wentworth and Robert adjacent to the proposed building.

Lighting

The submitted lighting plans do not contain details on lighting. As such, City Staff is requiring as a condition of approval that all lighting levels must not exceed zero foot-candles at all abutting property lines, and no direct glare may extend into the public street, public open space, or neighboring properties.

Landscaping

Setback areas, in part, are to be used as a buffer. Landscaping is a large factor in screening. The code outlines that there is to be one tree per every 40 lineal feet of property line. For this site as a whole, this

roughly calculates to 56 trees (2,251 lineal feet); the applicant is proposing a total of 46 deciduous trees as well as 20 evergreen trees, 5 ornamental trees, and 121 shrubs.

Additionally, when redevelopment and tree removal occurs the code requires a minimum of 30% replacement of the quality trees removed. The applicant is proposing to remove 6 trees, measuring 80 caliper inches, which with the 30% replacement requirement, the applicant is required to replant 24 caliper inches (roughly 10 trees if measuring at 2.5 caliper inches). As detailed above, the proposed landscaping exceeds the minimum code requirements.

Irrigation

No details on irrigation were included in the plans, as such, City Staff is recommending as a condition of approval requiring an irrigation plan upon application of a building permit.

Environmental Committee Review

The Environmental Committee met in regular session on August 5th, and reviewed the site plan for the proposed project.

The committee members liked the plans, especially that full tree replacement requirement was met with a good mix of trees and a public dog park is also being offered. The committee recommend approval of the plans with following additions:

- Strongly encourage the developer to use “pollinator friendly” native plants that are not treated with “neonicotinoids”, and
- Encourage the developer implement a better mix of Minnesota native plant species.

Staff is recommending as a condition of approval that the applicant consider to the additions and recommendations of the Environmental Committee per the memo dated August 7, 2020.

Construction Materials/Design

Section 153.032 of the zoning code, outlines the building materials for the B6 zoning district. The code details that at least 60% of the building must be comprised of primary materials (stucco, brick, glass, or other comparable material) and not more than 40% of the building can be comprised of secondary materials (textured or decorative block, synthetic stucco, metal, or wood).

The applicant is proposing a combination of brick, glass, fiber cement panels (all primary materials), and corrugated metal and a wood composite (secondary materials). The proposed materials and percentages comply with the code.



Signage

The proposed plans do not include signage at this time. Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring that all signage meet the requirements of Section 153 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Engineering/Stormwater Review

The site plan was reviewed by an engineering consultant to specifically review stormwater run-off and the proposed underground stormwater retention/filtration system.

The engineering consultant listed a number of recommendations regarding obtaining proper permits as well as items to address prior to permitting. City Staff is requiring as a condition of approval, that the applicant adhere to/address all items outlined in the WSB Engineering Memo dated August 12, 2020.

3) REZONING:

The subject property is currently zoned B6 – Town Center Mixed Use. The applicant is requesting to rezone the property from B6 – Town Center Mixed Use to PMD – Planned Mixed-Use Development, with B6 – Town Center Mixed Use underlying zoning. Note that Granny Donuts is not included in the planning applications associated with this redevelopment.

The proposal to rezone the property is consistent with the direction provided in the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

4) PLAT ANALYSIS:

Since the subject property was last platted in 1887 under the City of South St. Paul, City Staff has requested that the applicant plat the property as a part of the redevelopment project. The original plat only dedicated 30ft of right of way for Wentworth Avenue and 33ft for Robert St. Presently, both roads require more right of way, Dakota Co. has requested 40ft of right of way and MnDot has requested 33-40ft of right of way.

WSP Engineering Review

The West St. Paul Engineering Department reviewed the submitted plat and request that the plat be updated to include drainage and utility easements, 5ft along the northern property line and 10ft along Livingston Ave.

Dakota County Plat Commission

The Dakota County Plat Commission reviewed the proposed preliminary plat at their meeting on August 5th, 2020 and recommended approval of the preliminary plat subject to the following conditions (see memo dated August 7th, 2020):

1. Due to inadequate access spacing, the Commission will only allow for the western Wentworth Avenue access to remain open, if the Wentworth Avenue center median is extended west to Livingston Avenue,
2. The plat shall provide a private cross-access easement to Carbone's to maintain the option of a future shared access, in the event that the Carbone's entrance becomes a safety issue or the site redevelops, and
3. The plat shall dedicate 40ft of half right of way and a 10ft trail easement along the north side of Wentworth Avenue, and
4. With the recording of the final plat, a quit claim deed for the 10ft trail, drainage, and utility easement.

City Staff is recommending as a condition of approval that the applicant adhere to the items listed in the Dakota County Plat Commission memo dated August 7, 2020.

MNDOT Review

Since Robert St. is a state road, MnDot reviewed the proposed plat. The review makes note of several items such as noise along state highways, multimodal and transit connections, water and drainage requirements and permitting process. City Staff is recommending as a condition of approval that the applicant address the items outlined in the MnDot memo dated August 11, 2020.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT to allow a structure with mixed use commercial/residential and a structure with 16+ dwelling units in a B6 – Town Center Mixed Use District subject to the following condition:

1. Council approval of the corresponding site plan, rezoning, and plat applications.

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the SITE PLAN to allow for the construction of a five story mixed-use building at 1571 Robert St. subject to the submitted plans and the following conditions:

1. Council approval of the corresponding conditional use permit, rezoning and plat applications,
2. The applicant shall apply for and obtain all applicable building and sign permits,
3. The applicant shall ensure that all lighting levels will not exceed zero foot candles at all abutting property lines, and no direct glare shall extend into the public street, public open space, or neighboring properties,
4. The applicant shall ensure that an irrigation plan is submitted upon application of a building permit,
5. All signage must comply with section 153 of the zoning ordinance,
6. The applicant shall consider the recommendations of the Environmental Committee per the attached memo dated August 7, 2020,
7. The applicant shall adhere to/address all items outlined in the WSB Engineering memo dated August 12, 2020,
8. The applicant shall adhere to the items outlined in the Dakota County Plat Commission memo dated August 7, 2020, and
9. The applicant shall address the items outlined in the MnDot memo dated August 11, 2020.

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the REZONING of 1571 Robert St. from B6 – Town Center Mixed-Use to Planned Mixed-Use Development (PMD) with B6 – Town Center Mixed-Use underlying zoning subject to the following condition:

1. Council approval of the corresponding conditional use permit, site plan, and plat applications.

Staff recommends APPROVAL of the PRELIMINARY/FINAL PLAT for 1571 Robert St. subject to the submitted plat drawings and the following conditions:

1. Council approval of the corresponding conditional use permit, site plan, and rezoning applications,

2. The applicant shall revise the final plat, prior to recording, per the recommendations outlined in the attached memos from the Dakota County Plat Commission and MnDot,
3. Prior to recording the final plat, the applicant shall include 10 foot drainage/utility easements along the property line that abuts Livingston Ave, and a 5 foot drainage/utility easement along the north property line that abuts another lot, and
4. The final plat shall be recorded within one year of approval and prior to application of a building permit.